

For the General Reader and Musician alike

SOME
FAMOUS SYMPHONIES

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THEM

With their STORY & SIMPLE ANALYSIS

References also to Gramophone Records

By J. F. PORTE

With Portraits

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SOME FAMOUS SYMPHONIES

How to Understand **Them**



Beethoven

FOR THE GENERAL READER AND MUSICIAN ALIKE

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How to Understand Them
With their Story and Simple Analysis
References also to Gramophone Records

BY J. F. PORTE

*Author of "Sir Edward Elgar," "Sir Charles Stanford,"
"Edward MacDowell," etc.*

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FOREWORD.

THE orchestra is the supreme vehicle of musical expression, and the symphony is the greatest form of orchestral composition. In the present book will be found descriptions of symphonies by Austrian, Bohemian, English, French, German, Irish and Russian composers, sufficient indication indeed of music as an international factor. Without doubt an appreciation of the larger forms of orchestral music is making its way into many minds hitherto isolated from it either through diffidence, or owing to the opportunities of hearing such music worthily rendered being few and far between. Amongst the various agencies helping to remove these hindrances to a due appreciation of the symphony are the gramophone and radio telephony. It is to be hoped that these will be a means of encouraging further attendance at high-class orchestral symphony concerts when available.

The present book is mainly intended for the larger and newer musical public. For the purposes of affording the reader easier reference, the analytical sketch of each symphony discussed is separated from the descriptive matter which precedes it. It should, however, be realised that this does not indicate a definite distinction between the two aspects, which naturally intermix. Each analysis professes to be no more than a sketch that will enable the reader to follow the main structure of the symphonies. Anything in the nature of completely detailed reviews in this respect would require a larger volume, of interest only to the advanced and close student of musical form.

Technical terms and considerations have been purposely reduced to a minimum, but the original standard Italian indications of speed, expression, etc., are given. The symphonies are not treated in chronological order, as the present book is not an exposition of the development of *form*. The treatment of each composition here stands completely by itself; but any reader is of course at liberty to say that he *prefers* one to another. Individual appreciation and judgment are sources of the greatness of true art.

Gramophone records of many of the symphonies discussed in the present book are available as rendered by fine symphony orchestras under distin-

guished conductors. Certain of these are referred to under the headings of the particular symphonies concerned. These can be recommended for home enjoyment and study, as their degree of general faithfulness to the original will not lead the hearer to a poor idea of the music as it may sound in performance.

The following books can be used in valuable conjunction with the present one :

"How to Listen to Good Music," by K. Broadley Greene.*

"The Orchestra and How to Listen to It," by M. Montagu-Nathan.†

"Musical Pronouncing Dictionary," by Dr. Dudley Buck.*

The author's best thanks are due to the following firms for their ready help in placing gramophone records for his use in connection with the present book :

The Columbia Graphophone Company, Limited. The Gramophone Company, Limited ("His Master's Voice"). Edison Bell, Limited ("Velvet Face"). The Parlophone Company, Limited.

JOHN F. PORTE.

MCMXXVII.

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† Published by Kegan Paul and Co.

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APPROXIMATE PRONUNCIATIONS.

Names of Composers.

Beethoven. Bate'-oh-fen.
Berlioz. Bear-le-'oh(z).
Borodin. Borrow-'deen.
Brahms. Brahmz.
Chausson. Shohson(g).
D'Indy. Dan-de.
Dvorák. Dvor'-zhak.
Elgar. El'-gah.
Franck. Frahnk.
Glinka. Gleen'kah.
Haydn. High'-dn.
Liszt. Litz.
Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. Men'-delsohn-Bar'-toldy.
Moussorgsky. Mu-'sorg-skee.
Mozart. Mote'-zart.
Rimsky-Korsakoff. Rim'-skee-Kor-'sahk-off.
Schubert. Schoo'-bairt.
Schumann. Shoo'-mahn.
Smetana. Smet'-ahna.
Tchaïkovsky. Tchah-ee-'kov-skee.
Wagner. Vahg'-ner.

Names of conductors on gramophone records.

Moerike. Mer'-icka.
Rhené Baton. Ré-'nay Bah-'ton(g).
Romani. Ro-'mahn-i.
Stransky. Strahn'-skee.
Weingartner. Vine'-gartner.
Weissmann. Vice'-mahn.

BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY NO. 5, IN
C MINOR (OP. 67).

SYMPHONY No. 5, in C Minor, Op. 67.

BEETHOVEN (1770-1827).

BEETHOVEN'S Fifth, as often referred to as the "C minor," is one of the best known symphonies in the world. Its general popularity as a symphony is equalled only by Schubert's "Unfinished" and Tchaïkovsky's "Pathétique." So much has been written in the past about Beethoven's Fifth Symphony that were it not that the present book is written especially for the general reader, I should feel that any descriptive notes of mine would at this period be superfluous. The general reader, however, is probably more desirous of getting some ideas as to what the symphony is about than of perusing even an excellent technical analysis. Nor is this desire so wrong as at first sight may appear to the critical musician. In attempting a guide to the inner meaning of the symphony it is inevitable that at least the skeleton of its construction will be shown.

Before attempting any description of this symphony, a certain fine point has to be considered. The work is of a specified quality known as "pure" or "absolute" music. This means that it possesses no literary description and must therefore be listened to purely as music. This particular quality is the opposite to "programme" music, which has a literary description furnished or indicated by the composer. The furthest that "absolute" music dares to go on these lines is the possession of mere titles, leaving the music to suggest its own message to the hearer. Very few writers have resisted the temptation to try and read a definite meaning in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and that this should be so is quite natural. Music at its best is essentially spiritual, and should therefore convey some sort of message or even picture to the hearer's mind. Certain aspects of the symphony under discussion have effected a similarity of impression upon the majority of writers, and the following account is mainly based upon its generally accepted spiritual conception. The hearer is quite at liberty to supply his own meaning of the work, although it is certainly an outpouring of Beethoven's soul and can be best understood by considering the aspects of his life at the period of the symphony's composition.

Beethoven's growing deafness was at this time an increasing tragedy in his whole outlook. Add to this the pathetically recurring thoughts of a woman he hoped would prove to be his "eternal beloved one," and the always stormy aspect of his innermost nature, and we may then form some idea of the mighty struggle of feelings undoubtedly expressed in this symphony.

Few people possessing a real love of music can fail to be thrilled by Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Its appeal can never be confined merely to the initiated; nor would Beethoven have wished this. His recognition by the people gave him more genuine delight than did the appreciation of the connoisseurs. Pedantic opinion was not always favourably disposed towards the fire of Beethoven's genius. Lesuer, a teacher of Berlioz, heard this Fifth Symphony for the first time in Paris. Although strangely moved, he said to his pupil: "One must not make music like that." "Be easy, dear master," replied Berlioz, "one will not make much like it." The great French composer was a man of remarkable power of critical estimation, and his studies of Beethoven's symphonies were made when these were comparatively new and strange to French musicians; but posterity has seen no reason to do other than endorse his keen judgment. Berlioz's "A Critical Study

of Beethoven's Nine Symphonies" has been translated into English by Edwin Evans, senior,* and is of interest to all Beethoven lovers.

The first performance took place on December 22, 1808, and the dedication is to two of the composer's patrons and friends, Prince Lobkowitz and Count Rasumoffsky.

The orchestra consists of two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two French horns, two trumpets, two tympani (kettledrums), and strings (first and second violins, violas, violoncellos and double basses).

-
1. Allegro con brio.
 2. Andante con moto.
 3. Allegro, leading into
 4. Allegro.

1. The opening figure of three short notes followed by a longer one is most important, for it dominates the entire movement. Schindler once questioned Beethoven as to the meaning of these prophetic opening notes and received the reply: "Thus fate knocks at the door." On the other hand it has been said that the composer, always sensitive to rhythmic figures, derived this particular one from the call of a bird he had heard in

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the Prater. Whatever may have been its origin, this simple phrase, transformed by Beethoven's imagination, assumes an almost fateful significance. In the calmly flowing second subject, which will be easily recognised because of its contrasting character with the opening one, the fateful figure is heard as an insistent accompaniment in the basses. It is always dominating the music. Notice how it is bandied to and fro between wind and strings. In one part of the movement we come to a procession of solemn chords, gradually growing softer until the prophetic figure suddenly bursts in. Later on there is a little solo for oboe which, occurring after a loud chord, is like the faint cry of a sorrowful soul. We eventually come to a gradually mounting passage based on the second subject. The fateful motive is thundered out, poignant little interjections from the wood wind are heard, and the movement comes to a stern close.

A feature of this movement is its restless, striving spirit, coupled with an unmistakable suggestion of indomitable will power.

2. "The sorrow-laden soul derives a rapture of resignation which has never found utterance in such intimate tones as here," says Otto Neitzel. The first subject is announced by violas and 'cellos followed by "the comforting reply" in the

wood wind. The second subject will be recognised by its triumphant tone, especially when restated by the brass. It seems to express an uplifting of the stormy soul. The soft chords that follow have a poignancy of expression that is beyond literal translation. Most people find passage after passage in this symphony which moves them in an inexplicable way. The rest of the present movement, with its variation form, needs no written description here. Note, however, the expressive little bassoon passage not far from the end, where the music begins to quicken its pace (*più mosso*); this instrument in its higher register has anything but the comic character that is often attributed and sometimes assigned to it.

3. This is really the *scherzo* movement found in most symphonies, although here not so entitled. The first subject, sombre and fateful, enters softly in the lower strings. "Fate has followed the tortured soul even here; pale, spectral shadows haunt his imaginations," says Otto Neitzel. The second subject, loudly announced by the two horns, has an affinity with the significant figure of the first movement, although the first three notes are now more deliberately stated, and all four sound the same note. The two subjects of the present movement are greatly contrasted, the first always

appearing dark and shadowy, while the second is like a deliberate, fateful knocking.

The second section replaces the conventional *trio* portion. It abruptly starts off with a rapid passage for 'cellos and basses which Berlioz likens to the gambols of a delighted elephant. The tune is agile for the double bass players. It soon runs its course, dying away high in the flute, and the opening subject of the movement returns. The four-note figure follows chiefly in plucked strings (*pizzicato*). A gloom now settles over the music. Darker and darker grows the atmosphere until we come to one of the most remarkable passages in Beethoven's music; a tonal effect that has not been surpassed even to this day. The music sinks into what has been described as a "twilight atmosphere." The strings softly hold a long sustained chord, while the persistent tap of the fate rhythm is heard from the drum.* The first violins now breath the sombre first subject, and the relentless drum taps, backed up by the lower strings, now become ceaseless. The whole effect is one of thrilling apprehension. But the music grows louder and, as other instruments return, the dark curtain lifts and we are transported into:

* Second side of third record on "His Master's Voice" and "Columbia." First side of fourth record on "Parlophone."

4. The great, triumphant *finale*. Piccolo, double bassoon and three trombones are now added to the orchestra. Little else in music is more exhilarating than this bright march-theme breaking out of twilight. The second subject is given out by violas, clarinets and bassoons, and can be recognised by its descending figure contrasting to the ascending character of the first. Its heroic quality becomes apparent when it is restated by the full orchestra. After a time the fateful figure suddenly reappears. Its presence instantly damps the triumphant mood. Notice the sustained accompanying notes of that "silver thread" in the orchestra, the oboe. The music soon breaks into the sunshine of the march-theme and again proceeds in triumph. A new and bold tune is later announced by the bassoons, and some play is made with this before a *presto* enters in the form of an accelerated version of the second (descending) subject. The music grows more and more triumphant, the first (ascending) subject is vigorously recalled, and the symphony comes to a stirring conclusion. The movement has been likened to an expression of the soul's freedom after a hard won victory over a relentless fate.

For the musician desiring a full description and completely illustrated analysis of the Fifth and

other symphonies by Beethoven, there is the fine volume, "The Immortal Nine," by Edwin Evans, senior.*

The Fifth Symphony has been played many times for radio transmission in England. It is available in complete form for the gramophone in an efficient rendering by the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra, conducted by Sir Landon Ronald, on "His Master's Voice" records. The London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Felix Weingartner, play the work on "Columbia" records. Herr Weingartner is distinguished for his readings of the Beethoven symphonies. The orchestra of the State Opera House, Berlin, give a sound and characteristic performance under Dr. Weissmann on "Parlophone" records. The fine Philharmonic Orchestra of New York, directed by Josef Stransky, give an isolated and abridged, but nevertheless impressive rendering of the second (*andante con moto*) movement on a further "Columbia" record. The repeat of the opening pages of the first movement is played by Sir Landon Ronald and Herr Weingartner. Dr. Weissmann goes straight on without repeat; neither do his records take the shorter repeats in the *trio* portion of the third movement. These omissions do not affect

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the structure of the symphony in a manner that would justify the version being described as abridged. To avoid confusion it should be noted that the "Columbia" records label the third and fourth movements as "*finale*," parts one to four. The performance is of course unaffected as there is no break between the third and fourth movements.

BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY NO. 6, IN F
("PASTORAL"), (OP. 68).

SYMPHONY No. 6, in F, "Pastoral," Op. 68.

BEETHOVEN (1770-1827).

THE Sixth, "Pastoral," Symphony of Beethoven was composed almost at the same time as his wonderful "story of the soul," the Fifth (C minor). Together they present a wonderful contrast, each perfect in itself. In the Fifth we have the spiritual conflict, and an ultimate triumph over fate that thrills the hearer. In the Sixth, fate no longer "knocks at the door." The spiritual conflict is stilled, and the fiery, suffering temperament of Beethoven finds peace in the contemplation of nature, which he loved above all things. Wagner said that Beethoven turned from the inner struggles of the Fifth Symphony to the fellowship and consolation of nature and the simpler folk who lived in communion with her. I often think that the "Pastoral" is a truer expression of the inner soul of Beethoven than any other of his nine symphonies; it shows the real

joy and content for which he longed. He once said, when complaining that he could see no trees from the window of a lodging offered him: "I love a tree better than a man." How he must have loved the associations and inspirations of his "Pastoral" Symphony! Indeed, we know what it meant to him from the testimony of his friends, and from his own letters and notebooks: "It is as though every tree in the country said to me: 'Holy, holy,'" he wrote. "O God, in such a forest, on the heights, is found peace for Thy service."

The milder moods of this titanic man are infinitely touching. The great French composer, Berlioz, declared that the "Pastoral" Symphony affected him more deeply than any other of the nine. He speaks of it as follows: "This astonishing landscape seems as if it were the joint work of Poussin (the French landscape painter) and Michael Angelo." Beethoven told his friend Schindler that "malevolent interpretations" prejudiced the success of the symphony. He added the following words to the title: "More the expression of feeling than painting." Even if we keep these words in mind, the symphony must surely suggest visions of nature, especially as the movements bear explanatory titles by the composer. The work was composed in the summer of

1808 at Heiligenstadt, near Vienna, and first played in the latter on December 22 of the same year. The first performance in London was at the old Hanover Square Rooms on May 27, 1811, and the Philharmonic Society first played it on April 14, 1817.

1. Allegro ma non troppo. *Joyous sensations roused by arrival in the country.*
2. Andante molto moto. *Scene by a brook.*
3. Allegro. *Merry gathering of country people, leading into*
4. Allegro. *Thunderstorm, leading into*
5. Allegretto. *Shepherd's song. Glad and grateful feelings after the storm.*

1. The opening melody is a Croatian folk-tune. Sir George Grove described it "as sweet and soft as the air of May." The whole movement is clear and its meaning easily understood. An analysis of this would indeed be a dry explanation. Berlioz, in his delightful "A Critical Study of Beethoven's Nine Symphonies,"* says of it: "The herdsmen begin to appear in the fields. They have their usual careless manner, and the sound of their pipes proceeds from far and near. Delightful phrases greet you, like the perfumed

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morning breeze; and swarms of chattering birds in flight pass rustling overhead. From time to time the atmosphere seems charged with vapour; great clouds appear and hide the sun; then all at once, they disappear; and there suddenly falls upon both tree and wood the torrent of a dazzling light." Such a pictorial description provides a most excellent insight into the spirit of the music.

2. The "Scene by a Brook" brings a change of feeling. Shadows draw near. The scene is always peaceful, but charged with deep feeling. It is the very essence of quiet nature, even to the twitter of the birds. At the close we hear the calls of the nightingale (flute), quail (oboe) and cuckoo (clarinet). Some years afterwards, Beethoven pointed out to Schindler the exact spot in the valley of the Heiligenstadt, near Vienna, where he composed this movement. "A limpid stream descended from a neighbouring height, shaded on both banks by leafy elms," is Schindler's description.

3. The peaceful solitude of the preceding movement is now rudely invaded by rustic jollity. The simple boisterousness of the first part and the grotesque clumsy rhythm of the ensuing dance show, I think, how in his humour Beethoven was much more akin to his Netherlands ancestry than his German birth. The quaint awkwardness of

certain passages will be noticed. They are said to be an intentional caricature of the village band at "The Three Ravens" Inn at Mödling, for which Beethoven was not too lofty to write country dances. The merry-making returns. Suddenly, a soft *tremolo* in the lower strings breaks in, suggesting the approach of the storm. The merry-making is at once hushed, and the fourth movement entering without a break:

4. "I despair of being able to give an idea of this prodigious movement," says Berlioz. "It must be heard in order to form an idea of the degree of truth and sublimity that descriptive music can attain in the hands of a man like Beethoven. Listen!—listen to those rain-charged squalls of wind; to the dull grumblings of the basses; also to the keen whistling of the piccolo, which announces to us that a horrible tempest is on the point of breaking out." The storm grows nearer and more furious. Trombones now appear for the first time in the symphony. There is an uncanny stillness between the outbursts of thunder. "Beethoven's thunder put to silence all the tempests and storms that music had ever produced before his day," said Castil-Blaze. The movement is indeed a wonderful picture, vivid and thrilling in its suggestion, and it is doubtful if it has ever been surpassed, even by the "Royal

Hunt and Storm" of Berlioz himself. The storm subsides, and, without a break, we are gently conducted into the final movement :

5. A short prelude introduces a tune in the style of a "Ranz des Vaches" (Calling the Cows), played by clarinet and repeated by horn. A hymn of thanksgiving enters quietly in the violins at the ninth bar. This is afterwards taken up in turn by various instruments. "The herdsmen reappear upon the mountains," says Berlioz, "calling together their scattered flocks; the sky is serene, the rain has almost disappeared and calm returns." The theme is taken up by various instruments in turn. Two subsidiary themes lead to a full repetition of the "Ranz des Vaches" and the chief theme. The charming second subject is in B flat, and announced by clarinets and bassoons against semiquaver figures for violas. The rest of the movement consists of variations on the foregoing material and may easily be followed. In the peaceful *coda* the hymn of thanksgiving appears in all the sublimity of one of Beethoven's loftiest moods; but the "Ranz des Vaches" is heard in the last few bars from a muted horn against scale passages in the strings, thus giving a prosaic conclusion to the symphony. The final chords are typically abrupt, as if the composer closed with a snap this wonderful view of nature before return-

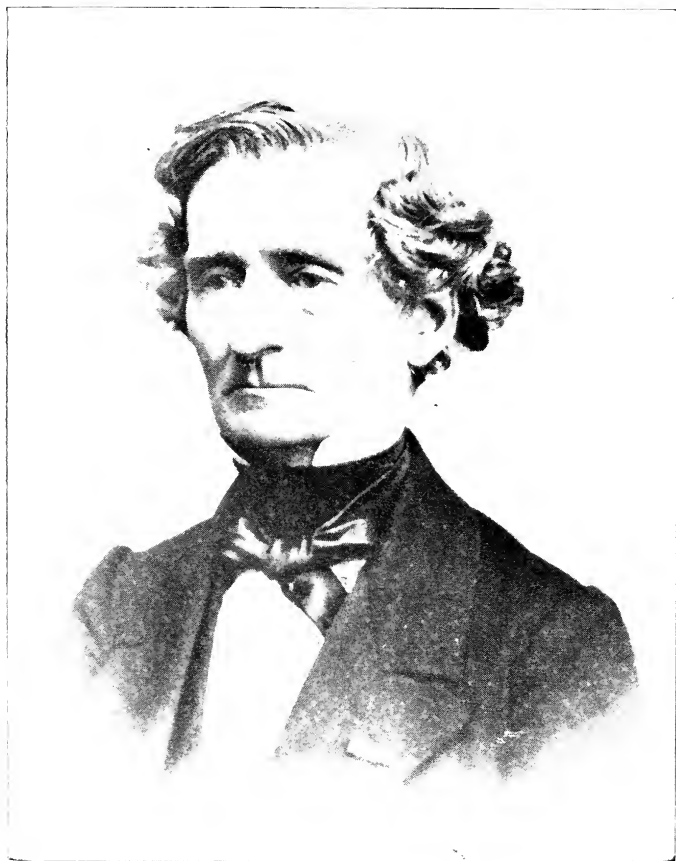
ing to the troubled career of his everyday world. For those who require a fully illustrated analysis of this symphony there is "The Immortal Nine," by Edwin Evans, senior.*

The symphony has been recorded for the gramophone by the orchestra of the State Opera House, Berlin, conducted by Dr. Weissmann, on "Parlophone" records. These enable us to hear some very fine German orchestral playing, and Dr. Weissmann gives an intimate, satisfying interpretation of the symphony. The village band in the *scherzo* movement is delightful, while the ensuing storm is magnificent, and we can understand the thrill experienced by Berlioz.

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BERLIOZ'S "SYMPHONIE
FANTASTIQUE" (OP. 14).

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Berlioz

“SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE,” Op. 14.

“Episode from the Life of an Artist.”

BERLIOZ (1803-1869).

BERLIOZ may be viewed as the great French classic in music. His nature was exceedingly excitable and subject to intense emotional storms in various moods. His frenzies sometimes verged on insanity and almost drove him to suicide. He was, nevertheless, a man of great intellect and passionate artistic feeling. Tchaïkovsky rated him as both a brilliant and exceptional phenomenon in the history of music, and as one who, in certain spheres of his art, reached ideal heights not attained by other artists. Berlioz, indeed, aroused interest everywhere, but he never succeeded in attracting a warmly admiring public as did Beethoven, Schumann and Wagner. Like them, he fought conventionality and obtuseness, but he was misunderstood and depreciated, especially in his own country. It is

only of late that we have come to regard him as a neglected genius, and even now he can hardly be considered popular when compared with Beethoven and Wagner. In one branch of his art, orchestration, Berlioz, however, has long been recognised as a very great master. His treatise on the subject stands with that of the Russian, Rimsky-Korsakoff, as a classic.

The "Symphonie Fantastique" is inseparably connected with an Irish actress who aroused a passionate affection in Berlioz. This was Henrietta Smithson, who came to Paris in the autumn of 1827 with a company of English Shakespearean players. Her impersonations of Ophelia, Juliet and Desdemona fascinated the Parisians. The tempestuous character of Berlioz's love for her can be seen in a letter he wrote to Humbert; I quote from the "Lettres Intimes":

"She remains in London, yet I feel her always about me; all my recollections awake and join to distract me; I hear my heart beat, and its pulsations shake me like the strokes of the piston of a steam engine. Each muscle of my body trembles with pain. Useless! Frightful! Oh! unhappy one! if she could for an instant imagine all the poetry, all the infinitude of such a love, she would fly to my arms—she would be ready to die in my embrace. I was on the point of beginning my big symphony ('Episode de la vie d'un artiste'), in which the development of my infernal passion will be painted; I have it all in my head, but I can write nothing. Wait!"

The love not being returned, Berlioz designed

the symphony as an instrument of revenge; all Paris should know who was the beloved one. Humbert warned Berlioz not to become morbid over Miss Smithson; but the composer had meanwhile found a fresh love, who had playfully been instructed to make affectionate overtures to him. He replied to Humbert as follows ("Lettres Intimes"):

"I do not intend to revenge myself. I pity her and despise her. She is an ordinary woman, gifted with an instinctive genius for expressing distractions of the human soul which she has never felt, and incapable of imagining such an immense and noble feeling as that with which I have honoured her."

At the symphony's first rehearsal in 1830, some trouble was experienced in finding enough chairs and desks for the big orchestra required, and the managers backed out of the project. The composer altered the work a great deal, and the new version was first played on December 9, 1832, together with "a melologue to follow," "Lélio, or the Return to Life." Berlioz, having lost his substitute love, arranged for Henrietta Smithson, then getting into poorer circumstances, to be brought to the performance. She recognised the allusion to herself in the work, and was even excited and joyful when she received an ardent love letter from the composer. Her theatrical enterprise finally collapsed, and she had the additional

misfortune to slip and break her leg. Her star was now set with the fickle Parisians, but, to his honour, Berlioz married the ruined and only half-cured girl.

The great violinist, Paganini, was so impressed by hearing two Berlioz symphonies, the "Fantastique" and "Harold in Italy," that he knelt and kissed the composer's hand before a group of musicians. Berlioz later received the following letter from Paganini:

My dear Friend,

Beethoven dead, only Berlioz is able to make him live again, and I, who have tasted your divine compositions, worthy of a genius such as you—I believe it my duty to beg your kind acceptance, as homage on my part, of twenty thousand francs, which will be paid on presentation of the enclosed.

Believe me always your affectionate

NICOLÒ PAGANINI.

The symphony presents a series of highly imaginative animated tone-pictures, and is scored for a large orchestra. It has five parts:

1. "Reveries and Passions."
2. "A Ball."
3. "In the Fields."
4. "March to the Scaffold."
5. "The Witches' Sabbath."

Berlioz supplied an elaborate programme to the work:

"A young musician of morbid sensibility and ardent imagination poisons himself with opium in a fit of despair caused by love. The dose of the narcotic is insufficient to kill him, but it plunges him into a heavy sleep, accompanied by strange visions, during which his sensations, his sentiments, and his recollections take the form, in his sick brain, of musical thoughts and images. The beloved woman herself becomes a melody—a kind of fixed idea, that he finds and hears everywhere."

"1. Reveries and Passions. First he remembers the uneasy state of the soul, the vague desires, the melancholy and elation without apparent cause, which he had experienced before he saw his beloved, then the volcanic passion she suddenly inspired in him, his delirious torments, his furies of jealousy, his reversions to tenderness, his religious consolations."

The introductory *largo* shows us the disturbed state of soul. In the succeeding agitated and passionate *allegro*, the theme announced in flutes and first violins should be well noted, as it represents the beloved—the "fixed idea" of which the composer speaks in his introductory programme notes. The movement shows the influence of the

beloved and the anguish of the lover. The few solemn chords at the end suggest the "religious consolations."

"2. A Ball. He finds the beloved one again at a ball, in the tumult of a brilliant fête."

The moving figures in the ball-room are delicately suggested. A waltz follows. The theme of the beloved appears, but the dance goes on with greater vivacity. Again the beloved is seen, only to disappear once more in the tumult of the fête.

"3. In the Fields. On a summer evening, in the country, he hears two shepherds calling and answering each other with the "Ranz des Vaches." This pastoral duet, the surrounding scene, the gentle rustling of the trees in the wind, some prospects of hope he has recently come to entertain, all combine to bring to his heart an unaccustomed calm, and to tinge his thoughts with brighter colour. But *she* appears again. His heart throbs, he is racked with painful forebodings. . . . If she should deceive him once more! . . . One of the shepherds resumes his simple melody, but no reply comes from his companion. . . . The sun is setting. . . . Distant thunder. . . . Solitude. . . . Silence."

A "Ranz des Vaches" (Swiss; calling the cows) is found in Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, No. 6.

Oboe and cor anglais (alto oboe) give out the calling and answering of the two shepherds. A quiet melancholy spreads over the music; but, as the artist's thoughts wander, the theme of the beloved appears, bringing a moment of agitation. The quiet mood returns as the pastoral surroundings comfort the artist. The theme of the beloved now appears in harmony with the peaceful scene. "Distant thunder" is skilfully suggested on the four kettle-drums.

"4. March to the Scaffold. He dreams he has killed his beloved, and that, condemned to death, he is being led to the scaffold. The procession advances to the sound of a march that is now sombre and wild, now brilliant and solemn, and in which the loud outbursts are followed, without a pause, by the heavy sound of marching feet. At last the "fixed idea" reappears for a moment, like a last thought of love, and is cut short by the fatal blow of the axe."

Drums beat a tattoo and horns give out sombre, sullen chords. A strange theme lurches along as the horrible procession to death approaches. The march bursts out and the whole passes on to the scaffold. A hush comes, when the theme of the beloved is about to be stated; but the knife drops, the head falls, and the crowd expresses satisfaction.

"5. The Witches' Sabbath. He finds himself at a witches' revel, in the midst of a frightful troupe of spectres, sorcerers and monsters of every kind, who have come to attend his funeral. Strange noises are heard, groans, bursts of laughter, and distant shrieks that are answered by others. The beloved melody reappears, but it has lost its character of nobility and gentleness; it is now nothing more than an ignoble, trivial, grotesque dance-tune; it is *She* coming to the revel. . . . Howls of joy at her coming. . . . She joins in the diabolical orgy. . . . Funeral bells. . . . A caricature of the "Dies Iræ." A Witches' Dance. . . . Finally the Dance and the "Dies Iræ" together."

A riot of sounds is heard; then follows the theme of the beloved, now horrible and bewitched, heard in the distance. Bells lend an unearthly colour to the witches' dance. The "Dies Iræ" follows. (This Latin hymn, "Day of Wrath," is said or sung as a sequence in the Roman Catholic Church at funeral masses.) A vivid and highly imaginative tone-picture, sinister and malevolent in humour, is built up. The Witches' Dance makes horrid sport of the "Dies Iræ."

The symphony is available for home enjoyment and study in a form that is unique in its perfection of interpretation. It has been recorded for

the Gramophone Company, Ltd. (His Master's Voice) by a famous French orchestra and conductor—Orchestre Symphonique des Concerts Pasdeloup, conducted by M. Rhené-Baton. It is my strong belief that, of all French composers, Berlioz especially needs a French orchestra and conductor to show him as he really was. The essential differences of outlook in French and Teutonic music are not always sufficiently considered, largely because we were all brought up mainly on German music, which has somehow become a standard of judgment for the art. There is no need for newcomers to carry on the false idea that German music is deeper, and therefore greater, than French music. The two are different.

The gramophone can bring to our own homes an entirely authentic performance of Berlioz's famous symphony; such a performance would have formerly entailed a journey to Paris. An extremely interesting, big-toned interpretation has since been secured by the London Symphony Orchestra under Felix Weingartner on "Columbia" records.

BORODIN'S SYMPHONY NO. 2, IN
B MINOR.

SYMPHONY No. 2, in B Minor.

(BORODIN, 1834-1887).

BORODIN was one of the Russian nationalist composers, with whom Tchaïkovsky did not entirely associate himself. Like his fellow-nationalist, Moussorgsky, he was really an amateur musician, his special occupation being scientific work and chemistry. While a military doctor he met Moussorgsky, who was an officer. Borodin became Professor of Chemistry at the St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) Academy of Medicine, a post which he held until his death. His most famous musical composition is the opera, "Prince Igor," completed after his death by Rimsky-Korsakoff and Glazounoff, who also revised and edited the Symphony in B minor. The skilled technical hands of these two composers, the latter still living at the time of writing, were of great help to the polished presentation of the genius of Borodin and Moussorgsky, whose musical train-

ing was not always extensive enough to do justice to their inspirations. Rimsky-Korsakoff was a very great master of the orchestra and a nationalist composer of repute. His recognition is universal.

Russian folk-music is one of the most interesting types to be found in Europe. It has instinctive melodic beauty, latent harmonic richness and restless rhythmic individuality. Its two main features are contradictory in feeling; the one sombre and melancholy, the other gay, reckless and wild. Borodin's Second Symphony clearly expresses these contrasting moods, which are undoubtedly related to the Slavic temperament and poor social conditions of the country, but his nationalism is hereditary, whereas that of Rimsky-Korsakoff is more the result of drawing on actual folk-tunes. The history of Russian music is a fascinating and essential part of musical education, and I warmly recommend the student to read M. Montagu-Nathan's "A History of Russian Music."* The book is extremely pleasant to read, and covers the whole range of Russian music from early pre-nationalist times to Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky and others of modern date.

Borodin apparently gave no title to his Second Symphony, although at a London performance

* Published by William Reeves Ltd.

under Albert Coates, a first-hand authority on Russian orchestral music, it was described on the programme as "Heroic Symphony." Finished at the end of 1876, the work received its first performance early in February, 1877, at a concert of the Russian Musical Society under Napravnik. The same year, incidentally, saw the first performance of another famous symphony, Brahms's No. 2, in D, which was produced in Vienna. There is a certain picturesque quality and Oriental tendency about much of Borodin's work, and it is evident in the symphony under notice. The barbaric splendour of the first movement, the peculiar colouring of the second, the dreamy sadness of the third, and the wild, rhythmic gaiety of the fourth, all combine to present music which, outside Russia, is like no other. Above all hovers that vastness, that air of latent might, tinged with gloom, which is more an expression of Russia itself than of the composer. In this particular respect, Tchaïkovsky fades before it—the musical expressions of individuality by the skilled composer pale before those of a mighty and harsh national history by the lesser expert who painted with inherent national feeling. "Listening to this music," said one of the Russian critics after hearing the symphony for the first time, "we recall the memory of the old Russian warriors in all their uncouthness, but also in all

their grandeur of character." At the time of this symphony's conception, Borodin was still haunted with those visions of mediæval Russia that took such vivid and picturesque shape in his opera, "Prince Igor," and in many respects it must be regarded as painting much the same period (twelfth century) in Russian history. The composer had commenced the opera about ten years previous to the production of his Second Symphony, and at his death another ten years afterwards it was still unfinished; but it should be remembered that his occupation as professor of chemistry did not allow him to give his whole time to musical composition. His intimate friend, Stassov, told Mrs. Rosa Newmarch, an English translator of "Prince Igor," that the composer had some definite picture in his mind when he wrote his Second Symphony. The first movement represents the assembling of the Russian princes and warriors of the tenth-eleventh centuries; the slow movement recalls the songs of the Slavonic bayoni (troubadours); the *finale* shows the banquets of the heroes of the Cycle of Kiev, enlivened by music of guslee and flute, amid the acclamations of the populace. Kiev is "the mother of Russian cities," and in the tenth century was the most important in the country.

Belgium was one of the earliest countries outside Russia to appreciate Borodin and Rimsky-



Borodin

Korsakoff. That this appreciation was genuine is shown by the fact that the composers were not merely personally acclaimed, but their works were regarded as classic. The Borodin symphony still holds this position in Belgian symphony repertoire.

The work is well known to London patrons of orchestral music through Sir Henry J. Wood's frequent performances at Queen's Hall Promenade and Symphony Concerts; but its first hearing in Newcastle was as late as December, 1924, when Sir (then Mr.) Hamilton Harty presented it to a large and delighted audience.

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1. Allegro.
 2. Scherzo. *Prestissimo.*
 3. Andante.
 4. Finale. *Allegro.*

1. The main theme of the movement, directed to be played resolutely, is announced immediately by strings in unison, supplemented later by wood-wind and horns. Its stern, bold accents might well represent the barbaric grandeur of mediæval Russia. A more animated theme follows at once in the wood-wind. These two strikingly powerful melodic figures are reiterated with picturesque changes of rhythm and variations of tonality, as

if emphasising the coloured, but fierce splendour of the assembled princes and warriors. The 'cellos introduce a much milder theme in the relative major key (D). The influence of the main theme is soon felt again, but the atmosphere grows dark and sombre. The tune is heard in sinister tones in the bass, and we surely pass one of the darker pages of mediæval Russian history. Instead of working out his themes, the composer seems more intent on repeating them. This he does with ingenious rhythmic modulations and variations of tonality. The main theme is transformed by a change to $\frac{3}{2}$ time. The drums start a characteristic rhythm, which is caught up by clarinet and bassoon; strings are still occupied with the main theme. The more animated tune is recalled, as is the second subject, which is now vigorously presented; and finally the main theme is given out in brazen accents by the brass. All three themes are now recapitulated; near the end the music becomes agitated and rushes quickly to a last statement of the main theme, which, given out in unison, has a most striking attitude of immense, barbaric force. Thus ends this fine tone-picture of the savage splendour of a dawning civilisation, the sinister annals of which are often dark with blood.

2. The *scherzo* (*prestissimo*—very fast) com-

mences with an arresting dissonant chord for brass. Horns follow with a persistent figure which serves as an accompaniment to a spirited subject for strings. A flash of quick wood-wind treatment foreshadows, or may perhaps be the editorial work of, Rimsky-Korsakoff. Following this comes a syncopated theme for strings in unison, accompanied by brass harmony.

The *trio* section is much slower (*allegretto*) and constructed on an oboe solo. The orchestral colouring becomes more glowing, and is enhanced by triangle and harp. The oboe theme is discussed for a while, and then the persistent horn figure returns. The *scherzo* is repeated, and the movement ends with a softly dying allusion to the syncopated theme. This movement seems to suggest the assembling of the princes and warriors to hear the songs of the bayani. Hastening movement, blending in glowing colours, is ultimately brought to a gradual hush as if the bayani are about to give their songs of love and heroism.

3. A plaintive introductory phrase for clarinet accompanied by arpeggios from the harp, curiously suggests the troubadour, whose song we can imagine in the ensuing dreamy horn solo. Borodin, like his fellow nationalists, had a subtle instinct for picturesque orchestral effects. A feature of the solo referred to is the alternation of $\frac{3}{4}$ and

$\frac{4}{4}$ times. A short, but striving four-note figure, later to become prominent, follows. Its feature is in ascending the last three notes of a major scale (6, 7, 8), and then dropping a major third to the flattened sixth of the minor scale. It seems a sort of heavy commentary on the solo. The music loudens, but quietens again when an episode is reached. Here the pace quickens and a passage is discussed between strings and wood-wind. The four-note figure becomes increasingly prominent until it reaches a big climax—a grim commentary, as if the song aroused glowing memories of love and heroism in the fierce hearts of the assembly. The figure that is passed from group to group reappears quietly, but it is dismissed, and the opening horn solo now appears in a heroic, richly-clad version. The quieter figure is heard, as is also the inevitable four-note commentary, and the discursive passage of the episode. The movement ends with the opening clarinet and harp phrase; the troubadour finishes as he began. The music very softly leads without a break into the next movement.

4. This commences with an establishing of the quaint dance rhythm, and first one group and then another hint at the principal theme which ultimately bursts in at the eighteenth bar. The whole atmosphere is gay, reckless and typically Rus-

sian. The second subject, which appears in the clarinet, is no contrasting mood, but adds to the general gaiety. It is continued by flute and oboe, and cleverly elaborated. Passages in this movement set the body pulsating with the reckless rhythm of the dance. In one place a loud *lento* (slow) version of the first subject solemnly interrupts the gaiety. The rhythmic treatment throughout this movement is remarkable, and frequent changes of time signature to suit the dances are noted. A bold passage for trombones in a new version of the first subject will strike the listener's attention. The gay spirit is too reckless to be dispersed, however. Near the end, the music has an urge to grow faster and wilder, and after a couple of restraints it rushes to an extremely exhilarating close.

BRAHMS'S SYMPHONY NO. 2, IN D
(OP. 73).



Brahms

SYMPHONY No. 2, in D (Op. 73.)

BRAHMS (1833-1897).

BRAHMS is generally considered to be the last of the "classical" composers. That is to say, he is credited with having carried on the development of the symphony from where Beethoven left it. As the latter wrote nine symphonies, the first of Brahms was enthusiastically hailed by admirers as "The Tenth." Whether Beethoven would have considered Brahms his successor is somewhat doubtful. The two have little in common, for where the former seldom hesitated to develop, stretch, or even break tradition to suit his ideas, the latter was careful to preserve the form of the great past, catching its letter rather than its spirit. He was like the Conservative who comes along and preserves some great past Radical traditions, oblivious to the fact that the true spirit of Radicalism is always going on ahead, although not in the impetuous fashion of the re-

volutionary. The longer Beethoven had lived the further would he have gone beyond the fixed form of classicism. Brahms happened to live during a period of considerable unrest in German music. The revolutionary tide of Liszt's symphonic-poems and Wagner's music-dramas was rising fast. The academical musicians saw in Brahms a reverence for form and tradition, so they flocked to his aid and hailed him as the true representative of the classical spirit. This was just what Brahms could never be; at heart a romantic sentimentalist, his works in the classical form have hardly anything of that purity, clarity and spontaneous expression that distinguishes the best symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, or even the "advanced" Beethoven. These composers used the symphony as a perfectly natural vehicle for self-expression; but Brahms made it a rigid formality which influenced and controlled the expression of his inspiration. He is best known to the general public by his delightful Hungarian Dances.

It is true that this master from Hamburg made a very good show out of his self-imposed limitations. His use of the brass instruments is often positively antiquated; he wrote for the limited effects of the valveless trumpets of Beethoven's day, although he must have been perfectly aware

that the parts would be played on valve-trumpets capable of something less simple. Yet his writing for horns is often extremely beautiful. Brahms, as we can see him to-day, was a great composer in spite of his friends and himself. His D major Symphony (No. 2) has a special place in the affections of lovers of orchestral music. Its first movement shows the composer at his best, and, significantly enough, is romantic in spirit. His writing for the orchestra is, as usual, thick and heavy; yet it is unable to obscure a noble romanticism and lofty thought. It may be that the dull, grey tint of Brahms's orchestra is but the reflection of his austere thought; and it is obvious that he did not need the gift of brilliant instrumentation in order to disguise poverty of material.

From a purely constructive point of view, the D major Symphony is ingenious. Above all, it is logical, utterly sane and unforced, and undoubtedly the work of a man with immense concentration of thought. This latter point enabled him to allow the plan to control the inspiration. As music, the symphony is genial and melodious, imposing no great strain on the casual hearer. There was a time when a Brahms symphony was considered to be mental food only for the initiated musician. The popular Promenade Concerts, under Sir Henry J. Wood, at the Queen's Hall,

London, and frequent performances elsewhere in England, and, indeed, throughout the musical world, have made at least the second of Brahms's symphonies well known. More lately the advent of radio concerts and the gramophone* have introduced the same work to a larger public.

1. Allegro non troppo.
2. Adagio non troppo.
3. Allegretto grazioso quasi andantino.
4. Allegro con spirito.

1. The opening bar has a phrase of three notes, given out by the basses, which plays an important part in the building up of the movement. Horns enter in the second bar with a theme of quiet beauty. The serious character of Brahms is soon evident, and bars of soft solo drum-rolls add to the general austerity. A smooth tune for violins follows. The music works up to a vigorous passage in which the figure of the opening bar is prominent. The second subject is as serenely beautiful as the first, and presents no emotional contrast. There is much that is noble in these dignified, thoughtful beauties of Brahms, especially when compared with the respective frank

* The gramophone records are reviewed at the end of the present chapter.

emotionalism and sensuosity of his great contemporaries, Tchaïkovsky and Wagner. A passage marked *quasi ritenente* brings a vigorous, striving tone to the music. The beginning of this will be easily noticed by the instruments leaping upwards in octaves, with trumpet prominent at the top. Two more tunes are included, one of which can be recognised by its quick rhythm of "RUM, ta-ta-RUM, ta-ta-RUM, ta-ta-RUM, etc.," and the other by its striving upward passage in the bass, treated in imitation by higher instruments. The latter tune has a syncopated accompaniment for clarinets, horns and violas.*

The development of the themes is very skilful, ingenious and closely knit. The recapitulation is with different instrumentation. The *coda* includes a lovely horn solo, and some playful treatment for flutes and clarinets, echoed by horn and bassoon.

2. The brooding opening is characteristic of the composer. 'Cellos play a descending phrase while bassoon has a counter ascending one. The former instruments continue with a lovely melody. A swaying figure for solo horn, taken up by oboe,

* All the foregoing, and a little more, is contained on the first side of the first of the four gramophone records of the symphony which are referred to at the end of this account.

which appears later should be noted. The middle section begins *L'istesso tempo, ma grazioso*, in $\frac{12}{8}$ time. It may be recognised by a change of mood shown by a lilting tune in the wood-wind, accompanied by *pizzicato* 'cellos. After a time there is a short, but perceptible period of silence, and then strings give out a flowing, if sad, tune. This becomes slightly impassioned, and then brooding. Fragments of it continue for some time after the opening tune has reappeared.

A calm mood settles over the music.* Violins play the first subject, followed by the swaying figure in flute and horn, and taken up by 'cellos and basses. An arresting trumpet and horn call, backed up by violas and 'cellos, takes the music into a surging passage. This is quieted by the flowing, sad melody for violins. The phrase from the opening of the movement becomes very prominent before the end, and its brooding mood brings the close.

3. The quiet opening theme of this delightful movement is first given to oboe, clarinet and bassoon, with *pizzicato* 'cello accompaniment; the triplet phrase in the fourth bar is to become prominent later on. The theme is treated with some

* Second half of slow movement—third record, first side—on the gramophone recording.

charming key transitions. A *presto ma non assai*, founded on the foregoing tune, follows in the strings. Entering quietly, it soon takes on a joyous mood. This subsides and the first part of the *presto* is bandied to and fro between strings and wood-wind. The opening theme returns, and much use is made of its triplet phrase, which develops into another jolly *presto ma non assai*. There is no dry Brahms here! The opening tune returns, and the movement ends with a touch of sentiment.

4. The *finale* is one of Brahms's finest movements. The first subject enters quietly, without preamble, and suggests great latent strength. Its power is more apparent when it is vigorously repeated. A new theme appears amid the general vigour of the music. It may be recognised by its downward step of a fifth in the treble, answered by an upward step back again in the bass. The music quietens, and the broad, simple tune of the second subject is heard from the quartet of strings. It is hardly possible to enumerate on paper the ingenious and beautiful development of the foregoing thematic material. If the listener has grasped these tunes, the further progress of the movement will enable him to see for himself what a very great master musician Brahms was. He will note that the ending shows a triumphant version of the broad tune of the second subject.

The symphony has been played for the gramophone by the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra, conducted by Sir Landon Ronald, and recorded in complete form by the Gramophone Company, Limited ("His Master's Voice"). Sir Landon may be described as a safe conductor for a Brahms symphony. He does not force his own personality on the music, but occupies himself with obtaining clarity and precision in his rendering, thus allowing the symphony to present its noble classic beauties and masterly construction in the composer's absolute language. This is perhaps the best possible interpretation, for Brahms does not call for emotional treatment. The second movement is played a little faster than usual. Owing to the thickness of the orchestral writing, the present good recording of this symphony must have been peculiarly difficult.

CHAUSSON'S SYMPHONY IN B FLAT
(OP. 20).

SYMPHONY in B Flat (Op. 20).

CHAUSSON (1855-1899).

FRENCH music has in this beautiful work a symphony that can take its place among the world's finest examples in its form. Unfortunately it is very seldom played in England, although I believe it only needs to become known to be appreciated. If we can take Franck's symphony so warmly to our hearts, we can surely take this one of Chausson as equally beautiful in all respects. Its somewhat richer, Wagner-like scoring, generally bigger tonality and more dramatic content make me prefer it to the Franck work; but this may be only a personal preference. We were indebted to the British Broadcasting Company for a London performance of this symphony. M. Pierre Monteux conducted it at their International symphony concert of December 10, 1924, at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The evening was unfortunately the occasion of one

of the worst fogs in London for many years, but although this naturally affected attendance at the concert, the advantage of being able to "listen-in" independent of the weather, was very apparent, even though such hearings are imperfect realisations of large orchestral works. M. Monteux had then lately relinquished his post as conductor of the Boston (U.S.A.) Symphony Orchestra.

Ernest Chausson was a pupil of two well-known French composers, first of Massenet and then Franck. The music of the former is light and tuneful, but extends to opera. That of the latter is of more austere and serious thought. Chausson gave himself earnestly to study and creative work, although as a man of considerable private means he was not dependent on his art. His opus number extends to 38, and Opus 20 is his only symphony. He is perhaps best known in England by his "Poem" for violin, which has been played by many distinguished violinists, including Albert Sammons. At the age of forty-four, a cycling accident brought his life to a sudden end. Estimating from the music that he left, and the symphony especially, Chausson might have become a great figure in musical history. Indeed, those who knew him closely say that a great development in his genius would have been almost

certain had he lived. Among these is his fellow-pupil under Franck, Vincent D'Indy, the master's biographer and well known as a composer.

The symphony was written in 1890, between eight and nine years before its composer's death. It has, like Franck's symphony, only three movements instead of the usual four.

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1. Lent. Allegro vivo.
 2. Tres lent.
 3. Animé: tres animé.

1. The slow (*lent*) introduction opens with a theme that derives significance from the fact that it is heard again at the end of the symphony. It is given out by clarinet, horn and lower strings, punctuated by soft, yet threatening chords for trombones. The atmosphere is charged with dramatic feeling. The theme is accorded a variety of treatment until a powerful climax appears. The excitement dies down to a passage in which a soft drum roll is very evident. An upward dash of violins, reinforced by wood-wind, takes us into the *allegro*. Horn and bassoon give out the first subject against a string *tremolo* accompaniment. It is taken up by 'cello and oboe, and a harp accompaniment is added. This is the beginning of a variety of instrumental treatment until the theme

is taken up in stirring fashion by the full orchestra, the harps playing a sweeping *arpeggio* accompaniment. The vigorous treatment subsides and a little melody in detached notes for the wood-wind leads to the second subject. This is a placid, graceful theme given out by clarinet and lower strings, with a soothing background of soft horn tone. The rest of the movement, with its development of the three tunes, and their recapitulation, can easily be followed. The hearer will hardly fail to notice a beautiful horn solo in the development portion.

2. This movement, very slow (*tres lente*), is somewhat in the style of a funeral lament, and extremely beautiful and moving in its poignant thoughtfulness and deep, underlying poetry. As in the first movement, the composer writes some lovely passages for horn. The solemn first subject, in the minor key, enters at once low in the strings, slightly reinforced by wood-wind and horns. It has steady, march-like accents that may suggest a funeral procession. After it has gone its course, a rising phrase for cor anglais (alto oboe) over a throbbing string accompaniment is noticed. This is immediately followed by another, but more rapid, rising phrase heard from the clarinet. These are accorded a variety of in-

strumental treatment. First violins play the first phrase, to which the flute, accompanied by other wood-wind, responds; second violins play the second, and so on until the first subject returns. The latter is a little changed and now clothed with rich, but quiet harmonies in the horns, effectively aided by extra brass quality from trombones and tuba. It has an accompaniment that runs among the wood-wind, and a sort of basis of lower strings. In the latter part of the tune the brass tone is completed by the trumpet, doubled in lower strings, joining in. The speed quickens somewhat (*un peu plus vite*), and the second subject enters in cor anglais and 'cellos, with an accompaniment of string arpeggios and a continuous soft drum roll. It is taken up by violins, 'cellos and horns, with a colouring accompaniment of wood-wind, and gradually works up to a noble climax in which the brass instruments have a sonorous and stirring prominence. The first subject is thundered out by all the brass instruments (horns, trumpets, trombones and tuba). The tone dies away and the speed slackens, but near the end the music swells out again with moving expressiveness. The movement has thus no placid conclusion; a fact in which we are able to see the force and reality of Chausson's artistic scheme in this symphony of striving and serious idealism.

The movement may, at the option of the conductor, pass without rest into the *finale* :

3. This is entered in a whirl of strings in octaves, through which trumpets, aided by some wood-wind, make a bold forecast of the first subject of the movement. Drum rolls add to the general animation. Violins fly up the chromatic scale, wood-wind take up the whirling figure, and horns, followed by violins and trumpet, give out the prophetic phrases. The full orchestra has two loud chords, wood-wind play the ascending chromatic flight, and then the movement proper enters (*tres animé*). The forecasted first subject enters immediately, but rather softly in 'cellos and basses with a repeated chord accompaniment for horns. Its character is agitated. Some wood-wind quietly join in, and, after a time, violins, high in the scale, double the 'cellos. Some connective matter leads to the second subject, where the music becomes still more animated (*encore plus animé*). The syncopated character of this new theme, mostly favoured by the full orchestra, adds to the striving vigour of the movement. Its mood appears changed when it takes the form of a solo high in the oboe, later transferred to the clarinet, beneath which the two flutes play a long double trill, three notes apart.

The two subjects are developed and recapitu-

lated according to the "classical" plan of a symphony. Near the end, trumpets and horns, soon reinforced by trombone and tuba, make a solemn (*grave*) reference to the theme heard at the commencement of the symphony. It is taken up by violins and wood-wind, while the basses suggest the first subject of the present movement. In the concluding bars the reference to the introductory theme is solemnly repeated by the lower strings, double-bassoon and horn over a soft, sustained chord from the rest of the orchestra. In this ultimate concluding mood of calm reflection we may again see the soundness of Chausson's artistic scheme of the symphony. The first movement, agitated and striving; the second, noble, sorrowful, but concluding in forceful tones; the *finale*, animated, vigorous, and ending in calm reflection with the memory of the symphony's commencement: all together show the artist in his passionate pursuit of the ideal, and, at the end, his sane and convincing mellowed mood when he recalls his setting out. This may not, of course, have been Chausson's plan when composing his symphony, but its suitability is a tribute to the unconscious perfection and balance of his genius.

DVORAK'S SYMPHONY NO. 5, IN E
MINOR, "FROM THE NEW WORLD"
(OP. 95).

**SYMPHONY No. 5, in E Minor, ("From the
New World"), (Op. 95).**

DVORÁK (1841-1904.)

ANTON DVORÁK was a Bohemian composer, the son of an innkeeper at Mühlhausen, and obtained his musical training in Prague, now the capital of the republic of Czecho-Slovakia. His strongly marked rhythms and striking harmonic flavours show him to be essentially a national composer. This should be borne in mind, because the title of the present symphony is apt to divert attention from its true idiom. "From the New World" is mainly an indication of the source of inspiration of most of the themes and the emotional content. The composer heard negro folk-melodies during his sojourn in America from 1892-95, as Principal of the National Conservatoire of Music, New York. He was impressed by reading Longfellow's "Hiawatha" and seeing the vast solitudes of the

American forests. Nevertheless, in the composition of his "American" symphony it was not to be expected that he could entirely eradicate his habitual national rhythms.

The production of the symphony by the New York Philharmonic Society on December 15, 1893, evoked much discussion and even annoyance. It was hotly contested as to whether the songs of the negro slaves of the Southern States could in any way lay claim to be regarded as genuine folk-tunes. It is interesting to recall the remarks made a few years later by MacDowell, the famous American tone-poet: "We have here in America been offered a pattern for an 'American' national musical costume by the Bohemian, Dvorák—though what the negro melodies have to do with Americanism in art still remains a mystery. Music that can be made by 'recipe' is not music, but 'tailoring.' To be sure, this tailoring may serve to cover a beautiful thought; but—why cover it? and, worst of all, why cover it (if covered it must be: if the landmark of nationality is indispensable, which I deny)—why cover it with the badge of whilom slavery rather than the stern but at least manly and free rudeness of the North American Indian? . . . Masquerading in the so-called nationalism of negro clothes cut in Bohemia will not help us." It will be seen that Dvorák's

idea of writing an "American" symphony at once furnished a problem as to what could truly be described as American music—and that problem exists to the present day. It is notable that MacDowell himself made use of North American Indian tunes in his "Indian" Suite for orchestra, and that other American composers, Charles Wakefield Cadman especially, have followed his example. Cadman has tried to find the real American spirit in music that expresses the spaciousness of the great Western "out-of-doors," and by the use of "idealised rag-time" for suggesting the restless energy of the great "melting-pot" of nationalities. Negro folk-songs, known as "Negro Spirituals," have become very popular vocal items in the concert-room; but they can never represent American music. The "New World" Symphony stands, therefore, a lone, forsaken prophet in this respect. From a purely musical point of view, however, it is one of the world's most stirring and brilliant symphonies.

I have given an explanation of the discussion over the source of the inspiration of this symphony in order that the hearer should not attach too much musical importance to its title. The work is best appreciated by a realisation of its essentially Slavonic idiom. Apart from the derivation of some of its themes, the work is not

far removed in spirit from its composer's popular "Slavonic Dances." Dvorák was more cosmopolitan than his great nationalist compatriot, Smetana, just as Tchaïkovsky was in relation to Glinka in Russia. In consequence, Dvorák and Tchaïkovsky were famous in their lifetimes, while their nationalist compatriots were venerated after death. He who hears Dvorák should also hear some of Smetana, or he knows the musical Czech no more than he who hears only Tchaïkovsky knows the musical Russian. The outstanding characteristics of the "New World" symphony are strongly marked rhythms, glowing emotion expressed with frank sincerity, deep underlying poetry, and lavish harmonic and orchestral colouring; all provide a continuous delight for the ear.

1. Adagio. Allegro Molto.
2. Largo.
3. *Scherzo*—Molto vivace.
4. Allegro con fuoco.

1. The solemn introduction contains no vestige of popular melody. Commencing softly, a sudden climax is reached. Following this, the first section of the principal subject of the *allegro molto* is foreshadowed in two horns, violas and 'cellos. A short vigorous passage leads to the



Dvorak

allegro molto, where the principal subject appears in two sections, the first in the horns and the second in the wood-wind. The first section should be well noted as, with modifications it appears in various places throughout the symphony. For the purpose of convenient recognition, it will be referred to henceforth in this account as the "main" theme. The theme is syncopated. After it has been fully elaborated, flutes and oboes introduce a gay subsidiary theme. The second subject proper is announced in a flute solo,* and will be easily recognised by those who know the "negro spiritual," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," to which, although in faster time, it has a close resemblance. It is taken up by the violins. Keeping the foregoing tunes in mind, the listener should have no difficulty in recognising their ensuing "working out," and following the movement to its extremely vigorous conclusion.

2. The *largo* is a famous movement, said to have been partially inspired by Longfellow's "Hiawatha's Wooing." The solemn and impressive opening chords are thought to be a musical suggestion of the silent majesty of the great American forests, and are played by clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, trombones and tuba.

* Occurring late in Part 1 of both "Columbia" and "His Master's Voice" gramophone records.

The principal melody is romantic and lovely, and announced by the cor anglais (alto oboe), accompanied by muted strings. After a time comes a sudden change of key and a slight quickening of speed. Flute and oboe give out a short, but haunting new tune. This is immediately followed by the second subject, a little slower in speed, given out by clarinets and answered by flute and oboes, the bass strings accompanying *fizzicato* (plucked).* The oboe later announces a pert little passing tune.† Some play is made with this, and a climax is reached in which trombones make a brief reference to the "main" theme. The cor anglais solo returns, is taken up by solo violin, and, after recalling the solemn opening chords, the movement closes quietly.

3. The *scherzo* abounds with a quaint liveliness, gay in instrumental colouring. After a few hints, the first theme is announced by flutes and oboes, imitated by clarinet. It is very short and sprightly, but of much rhythmic importance and abundantly used in imitation among the various instruments. The second subject is quieter and

* Occurring in Part 4 of "Columbia" gramophone records. The "His Master's Voice" version omits this, but the repetition of the subject by violins occurs at the beginning of Part 2 of the Largo disc.

+ Occurring at beginning of Part 5 of "Columbia" records.

slower, and, like the first, announced by flutes and oboes. Its accents are inclined to be lively. The first subject returns and leads to the *trio* section, two references to the "main" theme, first in 'cellos and then violas, being heard on the way. The *trio* enters with a charming theme in the wind, followed by an equally delightful one in the strings. The *scherzo* is repeated, and in the *coda* we notice very definite references to the "main" theme. Near the end the sprightly tune appears to dissolve into fragments until it is finally banished by a loud chord.

4. The powerful *finale* commences with nine introductory bars,* after which horns and trumpets boldly announce the chief theme of the movement. A feature of this tune is that it relies on bare melody, harmonic dress having no essential part in its existence. A new and vivacious tune in triplets is soon heard in the violins. The second subject is a quiet theme given out by solo clarinet, punctuated in the 'cellos by fragments of the vivacious tune. A climax, which is said to contain a gay reference to the tune of "Yankee Doodle," is built up. The development is brilliant and warm-hearted. The themes of the movement are weaved into glowing mixtures, and

* Omitted in the "His Master's Voice" records.

a brighter version of the cor anglais theme may be noted.* The bold first subject flirts gaily with the vivacious tune. Reference to the "main" theme is made in a big climax. The music dies down and we come to the appealing cor anglais theme of the slow movement, now punctuated by the sprightly opening tune of the *scherzo*.† The bold theme of the present movement follows in subdued horn tone, but the accents of the sprightly *scherzo* tune persist quietly from the drum. A sudden climax follows, in which the bold theme asserts its strength. The "main" theme is thrown across the screen, and this brilliant, tuneful symphony moves quickly to a glowing conclusion.

Many radio performances of the "New World" symphony have been given, and interpretations at home are available at will for those who possess a gramophone. The famous Hallé Orchestra, of Manchester, conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty, gives a glowing rendering of the complete work on "Columbia" records. The Royal Albert Hall Orchestra (London), conducted by Sir Landon Ronald, gives a well played, slightly abridged version on "His Master's Voice" records.

* Occurring in Part 9 of "Columbia" records.

† Occurring in Part 10 of "Columbia" records.

ELGAR'S SYMPHONY NO. 2, IN E FLAT
(OP. 63).

SYMPHONY No. 2, in E Flat (Op. 63).

ELGAR (1857-).

“Rarely, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of delight.”—SHELLEY.

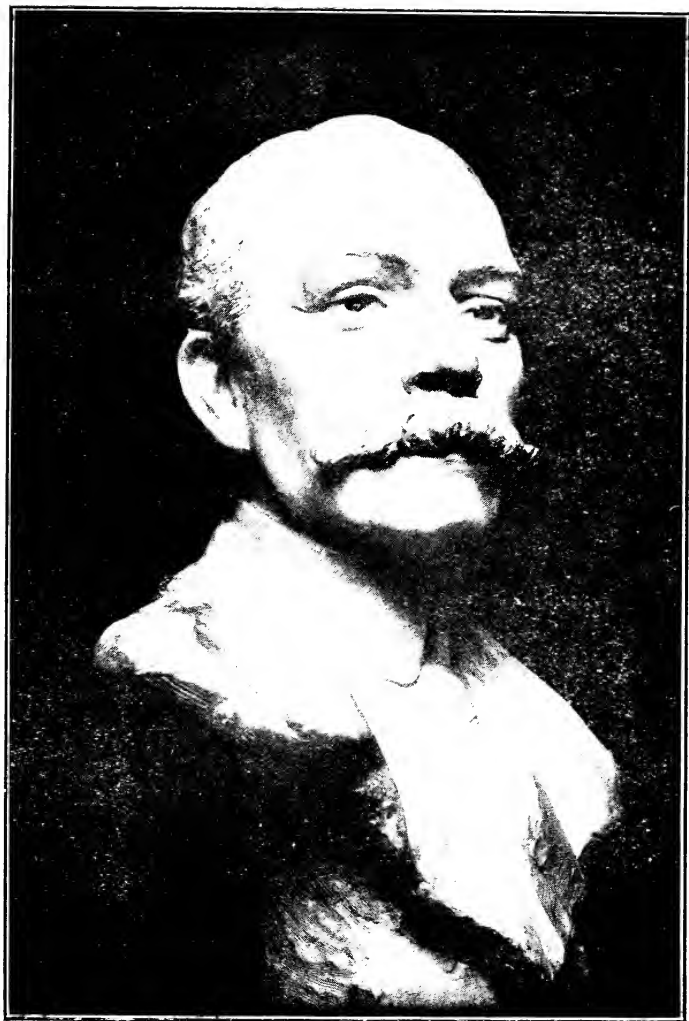
THIS is generally acknowledged as one of the finest contemporary orchestral works.

It is often rash to write glowingly of contemporary art, for posterity has a habit of reversing our judgments. Nevertheless, if a present-day work arouses in us a thrill such as that produced by the acknowledged great ones of the past, we should not hesitate to acclaim it. The days when Beethoven was squabbled over because of his apparent revolutionary proclivities have faded into history; the thousands of Beethoven lovers to-day frankly owe their allegiance solely to the spiritual power of his music. The ordinary initiated music-lover often has an advantage over the probing musical analyst, because he judges compositions according to how they appeal to his

ear and his feelings rather than his brain. This is not an altogether faulty mode of judgment if the truest test of music lies in its ability to stir the emotions of the hearer. The importance of so much extremely "modernist" music lies in strikingly "new" harmonies and weird instrumental effects, but its appeal to the ear as music is often a failure; the letter is made more important than the spirit.

It is hardly possible to fully comprehend Elgar's E flat Symphony at one hearing, for it is very rich in design and of considerable length. More than a dozen themes and motives, striking episodic matter, contrasting harmonic beauties, and superb instrumentation, combine to present the spiritual message of the symphony in a lavish dress, the very brilliance of which is too dazzling for the inner meaning to be clearly felt at first acquaintance. Yet it is possible to realise at once that one is listening to a work of genius that is presented with the finished craftsmanship of an established master.

The work was designed early in 1910, and its dedicatory inscription, to the memory of King Edward VII, is dated March 16, 1911. Elgar's reputation had at this time been strongly founded on his famous "Enigma" variations for orchestra, and the oratorio, "The Dream of Gerontius," the



Elgar

two later oratorios, "The Apostles" and "The Kingdom," the Symphony in A flat (No. 1), and the Violin Concerto; the last-named had only appeared in November, 1910. He had reached the stage where everything new from his pen was awaited with widespread interest. The Symphony in E flat was ultimately produced by the composer and the Queen's Hall Orchestra (London) for the first time on May 24, 1911. The concert was the third given in the London Musical Festival of that year.

After its production the work was strangely neglected, but, in 1920, it met with a brilliant revival, and, chiefly owing to the persistence of Sir Landon Ronald, has since become the best known of Elgar's two symphonies, hence its place in the present book. Its spirit of unbounded joy is a complete psychological contrast to the A flat Symphony. The reader who desires a more completely analytical account, with musical illustrations, than that following, may be referred to my monograph, "Sir Edward Elgar."*

-
1. Allegro Vivace e Nobilmente.
 2. Larghetto.
 3. *Rondo*. Presto.
 4. Moderato e Maestoso.
-

* Published by Kegan Paul and Co.

The poem of Shelley from which Elgar took this symphony's motto is rather melancholy in character. The symphony does not at first reflect the regret of one to whom the spirit of delight is lost, as expressed in the poem, but is rather an expression of that rare spirit itself.

1. *Nobilmente*, noble or lofty, is a favourite musical term of the composer. Notice the bounding spirit of delight with which the work opens. The second and third bars are very important, expressing the inner spirit of the work. They are sadly recalled at the very end of the symphony. Three other tunes closely follow, also expressing a joyous spirit; note how the first two of them run in thirds, and incidentally they have that restless energy often peculiar to Elgar. How gorgeous is the harmonic and instrumental colouring, and how the music leaps along with exuberance! Now a quieter tune appears; but its serenity distinctly echoes the bounding spirit of the preceding tunes.

The second subject proper is easily recognised by its contrasting mood, first expressed in a lovely, drawn-out melody by the 'cellos. The working out of the theme is remarkable for some striking episodic matter. A strange change that comes over the atmosphere will not pass unnoticed. The whole aspect becomes mysterious,

and the joyous tunes, although their bounding appearance is still recognisable, are strangely subdued. An enigmatic spirit floats through the music, the colour of which is now unearthly and weird. Piercing discords and a far-away throbbing of the drum suggest fantastic shadows to the hearer.

Later, the joyous spirit seems suddenly to break the shadows and then quickly spread out its light. Note the subsequent very loud and deliberate statement of the important opening theme, the symbol of the spirit of delight. The movement can now be easily traced to its end, the complex and multi-coloured construction only serving to emphasise the contrasting moods, joy being the dominating factor.

2. This slow movement contains some of Elgar's grandest music. It breathes lofty and tender thoughts, and at times reaches a depth of expression that is among the rare things in music. Softly breathed chords open the movement and lead us to a broad and thoughtful theme which expands to glowing warmth. Mystic chords now lead us to another theme, this time a wistful one in thirds. This is in turn followed by a long-drawn melody. The hearer cannot miss the big *Nobilmente* section, with its loud tones which soar to lofty heights of expressiveness. The movement proceeds with a richly-garbed thoughtful-

ness. At the end, its first theme is recalled with quiet dignity and the mystic chords bring the close.

This *larghetto*, with its thoughtful dignity, serenity and loftily-voiced expression, seems like a profound utterance of wisdom after the exuberance of the preceding *allegro*.

3. This movement has some very exhilarating, almost breathless passages for the wind instruments. The *rondo* is in an extended modern form, and the chief tune makes itself very familiar before the movement is over. It appears at once, quietly, but of extremely agile character. Like some of the other tunes in the work, it runs in thirds. A second tune appears, having something of the bounding spirit of the first movement. It is joined by another which has a contrasting descending motion. The *rondo* moves swiftly along, dazzling in the quick brilliance of its instrumentation. After a time, a curious four-note figure may be frequently noticed. It sounds out of time with the natural three-note figure of the bar. Eventually a strange force is felt; it has an affinity with the shadowy presence that at one part obscures the first movement. The general gaiety disappears as this dark spirit grips the whole. Shapeless accents in the tympani and bass and side-drums create a weird effect as they

increase in intensity. Once again the listener's imagination is directed towards the fantastic. The agile tune presently flits, frightened, across the dark shadow, but the latter still persists. It is the second tune of the movement that eventually quietly brings a clearer atmosphere. The *rondo* then proceeds with contrasts and many deft instrumental figures to a brilliant end.

4. The concluding movement opens quietly with a swinging tune that is typical of the composer. Another, with firmly marked accents, follows. This is in turn followed by a *nobilmente* tune. Later, a somewhat less spirited theme is noticed. The movement goes firmly on, raising no such dark problems as are found in the first and third movements. Its general trend is a healthy firmness after the exuberance, profundity and excitement, respectively, of the first three movements. Near the end it grows subdued, however, and the opening theme of the first movement now appears transformed into the serenity of a beautiful memory. "*Rarely, rarely comest thou . . .*" The symphony concludes in a mood of wistful finality, making slow (*molto lento*) and distant references to the *nobilmente* theme and the swinging opening of this movement.

Elgar's second symphony has received a radio

performance under Sir Landon Ronald, who is probably its finest interpreter.

It is available for the gramophone, interpreted by the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra under Sir Edward Elgar, O.M., himself, and recorded for "His Master's Voice." The possession of a recording of the symphony actually conducted by its great composer is of historic value.



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